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Security Council

Fifty-fifth Year

Provisional

4098th Meeting

Monday, 7 February 2000, 12.20 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Listre	(Argentina)
Members:	Bangladesh	Mr. Chowdhury
	Canada	Mr. Fowler
	China	Mr. Shen Guofang
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Mali	Mr. Ouane
	Namibia	Mr. Andjaba
	Netherlands	Mr. van Walsum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Tunisia	Mr. Ben Mustapha
	Ukraine	Mr. Yel'chenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Ms. Soderberg

Agenda

The situation in Sierra Leone

Letter dated 23 December 1999 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1999/1285)

Second report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 1270 (1999) on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (S/2000/13 and Add.1)

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The meeting was called to order at 12.20 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Sierra Leone

Letter dated 23 December 1999 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1999/1285)

Second report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 1270 (1999) on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (S/2000/13 and Add.1)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Hédi Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Annabi to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Security Council have before them the letter dated 23 December 1999 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, document S/1999/1285, and the second report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 1270 (1999) on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, documents S/2000/13 and Add.1.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Hédi Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, regarding the situation in Sierra Leone.

I give the floor to the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

Mr. Annabi: Since we last briefed the Security Council on 12 January, the situation in Sierra Leone has remained relatively stable, although there have been a number of serious incidents, to which I will refer in this briefing.

As members of the Council are aware, in the letter of 23 December addressed to the President of the Security Council by the Secretary-General, as well as in his subsequent report to the Council of 11 January, the Secretary-General informed the Council that the Government of Nigeria had decided to repatriate its troops participating in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Sierra Leone.

On 13 January, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria wrote to the Secretary-General indicating that his Government was

> "prepared to suspend for 90 days the withdrawal of those forces deemed necessary to maintain security in Sierra Leone if they can be re-flagged as United Nations peacekeeping troops".

In anticipation of the adoption of the draft resolution that would expand the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), we have initiated negotiations with a high-level Nigerian delegation headed by the Chief of Staff of the Nigerian Armed Forces, Major-General Malu, which in fact started in Freetown today. The purpose of these talks is to discuss the modalities for the incorporation of additional Nigerian troops and equipment into UNAMSIL. As of today, there are reportedly 5,500 ECOMOG troops remaining in Sierra Leone, mostly concentrated in and around Freetown peninsula.

Turning now to UNAMSIL's deployment, Council members will remember that, in view of the withdrawal of Nigerian troops from several key locations in Sierra Leone at the end of December last year, UNAMSIL had to accelerate its own deployment, despite the substantial risks in doing so, to Makeni, Magburaka, Kenema and Daru. At present, United Nations troops are also deployed in the Freetown peninsula, at Lungi airport and its vicinity, Papel and Tasso Islands, Port Loko, Lunsar, Masiaka, Rogberi and Mano Junction. A quick-reaction company from India, as well as a guard and administrative company and an engineer company, are also deployed in and around Freetown. In addition, a reconnaissance is underway in the area of Kailahun in preparation for the deployment of the Indian battalion to that area.

The total strength of the military component of UNAMSIL currently stands at 4,830 personnel, including 232 military observers. It should be noted, however, that some battalions that have joined UNAMSIL lack essential equipment, which of course affects their operational capabilities. It should also be noted that during the course of last month there were several incidents in which UNAMSIL peacekeepers were confronted by rebel elements, but did not respond, in our view, in a satisfactory manner. This is of course a matter of particular concern to us here at Headquarters, but also to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Adeniji, and to the Force Commander, Major-General Jetley. The matter was extensively addressed and discussed at the troop contributors' meeting, which was held on Friday of last week, and on Friday the Military Adviser also held a separate meeting to discuss these issues with the representatives of the major troop contributors. At the same time, the Special Representative and the Force Commander have been consulting on the ground with all the contingent commanders to impress on them the need to apply UNAMSIL's rules of engagement resolutely, and the need to apply them strictly, in accordance with the mandates entrusted to UNAMSIL by the Security Council. Simultaneously, the Special Representative is working with Foday Sankoh and Johnny Paul Koroma in order to put an end to the recent attempts by rebel elements to restrict UNAMSIL's freedom of movement, and in order to secure the return of the weapons and equipment that have been seized from United Nations troops by these rebel elements.

The security situation in the country, I have to say, remains difficult, with a continued high level of ambushes, lawlessness and banditry in a number of areas. Continued attempts to restrict the freedom of movement of United Nations personnel in rebel-held areas are also, as I just mentioned, a source of major concern. While Freetown and Lungi remained relatively calm, there was in recent weeks a discernible increase in rebel-related activity, in particular along the Port Loko-Lungi road. In Port Loko itself, following a grenade explosion in a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) camp, the security situation has remained tense. Ceasefire violations have also been reported in the areas of Occra Hills, Pepel Island and Masiaka. In addition, UNAMSIL has reported tension at Daru and Segbwema as a result of movements by armed Revolutionary United Front (RUF) elements.

On the other hand, since we last briefed the Council, more than 60 child soldiers have been released by ex-Sierra Leone Army (SLA) rebel commanders at Occra Hills.

As regards the disarmament process, it has continued to be slow, except for in the Port Loko area, where a large number of additional combatants were disarmed recently. As of 3 February — the end of last week — 7,616 ex-combatants had been disarmed. There continue to be incidents in which ex-combatants arrive at DDR sites with no weapons or with only hand grenades. It should be noted that at a recent Joint Monitoring Commission meeting, held in Freetown, rebel representatives claimed that the RUF leadership had not allowed their commanders to surrender their weapons. Such ambivalence on the part of the rebel leaders of course raises questions regarding their readiness to cooperate in good faith with the DDR process and to implement their commitments under the Lomé Agreement.

In the meantime, there have been indications that President Kabbah, Foday Sankoh and Johnny Paul Koroma may issue a press release proposing 29 February as the deadline for the end of the disarmament process. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General believes — and we agree of course — that any deadline for disarmament should be realistic. He is currently discussing this issue with the President and the other parties concerned.

Regarding the human rights situation, on 20 and 21 January two United Nations human rights assessment missions were conducted in Port Loko and Kabala. In Port Loko, most human rights abuses appear to be perpetrated by ex-SLA elements from the Occra Hills area. There are almost daily reports from this area of looting, burning of houses, harassment and abductions of civilians, as well as of sexual abuse and individual abductions.

In the meantime, in Kabala, incidents of harassment, abduction and rape somewhat subsided last month. However, the civilian population continues to be harassed by ex-SLA combatants roaming the area in search of food and shelter. In RUF-dominated areas around Alikalia, the continued imposition of so-called taxation is having an effect on local food availability.

There has been some progress with regard to the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Attorney-General and the Minister of Justice of Sierra Leone on 2 February informed the Special Representative of the Secretary-General that the draft statute to establish the Truth and Reconciliation Commission had been finalized. It is expected that the

draft statute will be circulated to the Cabinet shortly, with a view to its adoption by Parliament, hopefully later this month. At the same time, UNAMSIL and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights continue to assist the Government in its preparations for the establishment of the Human Rights Commission.

As regards the humanitarian situation, plans for the rapid expansion of humanitarian operations inside the country, starting with Makeni, continue to be delayed by insecurity. A comprehensive inter-agency humanitarian assessment mission to those areas was postponed until this week due to rebel activity. In Kabala, humanitarian workers also continue to be harassed by disarmed combatants. As a result, despite the efforts of United Nations agencies, humanitarian activities in the northern and eastern parts of the country remain limited.

The World Bank, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Development Programme have just completed a high-level mission to Sierra Leone to explore operational responses aimed at strengthening the linkage between humanitarian assistance and early reconstruction and development. Preliminary consultations to this effect with members of the humanitarian community are scheduled to take place shortly in Geneva.

Finally, a word about recent political developments. On 24 January, the second meeting of the Joint Implementation Committee was held in Freetown. This meeting confirmed the commitment of ECOWAS to remain fully involved in the peace process. The current Chairman of ECOWAS, President Konaré of Mali, has announced his intention to undertake — together with President Kabbah, Foday Sankoh and Johnny Paul Koroma — visits to the provinces of Sierra Leone, in order to try to give a fresh impetus to the DDR process. President Konaré also appointed a Special Envoy for Sierra Leone to ensure effective coordination between ECOWAS and other partners in the peace process.

The implementation of the Lomé Agreement, however, remains difficult. On 20 January, while addressing RUF commanders in Makeni, Foday Sankoh instructed them not to allow the deployment of United Nations peacekeepers. The Special Representative, Mr. Adeniji, reacted to this with a strongly worded public statement, which in turn led Foday Sankoh to state that his comments had been misunderstood.

On 23 January, Foday Sankoh, in his capacity as Chairman of the Commission of the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development (CMRRD), announced a moratorium on all mining activities, as well as the cancellation of existing mining licenses issued before 24 January. This announcement was publicly supported by the Government. Some parliamentarians, however, have voiced their uneasiness with this decision. In this connection, it should be noted that neither the CMRRD nor the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace are yet operational, and the Government is currently consulting with Mr. Sankoh and Mr. Koroma on how to expedite the work of these institutions. In the meantime, Mr. Koroma officially resigned from the Sierra Leone Army on 28 January, apparently to be able to pursue his goals through political means, while Mr. Sankoh publicly alluded to the possibility of running for the presidency in the elections to be conducted next year.

In conclusion, we feel that it would be important for regional leaders and Security Council members, whether individually or collectively, to continue to engage all parties in this process to impress upon them the need to fulfil their commitments under the Lomé Agreement and to cooperate fully with UNAMSIL in the implementation of its mandate. In this connection, President Konare's proactive approach towards the peace settlement in Sierra Leone is a very encouraging development. The proposed joint visit of President Konare, President Kabbah, Mr. Sankoh and Mr. Koroma to the provinces also highlights the urgent need to extend State administration throughout the country.

It is hoped that the establishment of a credible UNAMSIL presence in strategic locations throughout Sierra Leone, including in and around Kailahun, will facilitate that process. We and the Special Representative are actively working towards that end. At the same time, it would also be important to pursue and strengthen the ongoing bilateral and multilateral efforts regarding the training of the Sierra Leonean military and civilian police in order to advance the implementation of the Lomé Agreement.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: I thank Mr. Annabi for his comprehensive briefing.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): We are very grateful to Mr. Annabi for his briefing and for all the hard work that the Department of Peacekeeping

Operations is doing to get the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) in on the ground.

At this point, I only want to ask a couple of questions about UNAMSIL's ability to deploy. First, as regards the logistical effort that needs to be upgraded, I wanted to ask whether there were still shortfalls or whether the gap has been filled with civilian contractors. And is it logistics that is affecting the ability to deploy UNAMSIL outside Freetown at an early date, or are we going deeper into the business of the capacity of UNAMSIL's contingents at this moment to go beyond a very restricted area of operations? Thirdly, could Mr. Annabi let us know which countries so far have agreed to contribute troops to the enlarged UNAMSIL and whether he can give us a clearer idea of the time frames that he is envisaging for full deployment?

I will stop here. I will make other comments when we come to our second meeting.

Mr. van Walsum (Netherlands): We are grateful to Assistant Secretary-General Annabi for his realistic and hardly reassuring briefing.

The draft resolution we are about to adopt is a very sobering one. It plainly lists the major shortcomings in the implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement before focusing on the immediate problem of the withdrawal of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). This is the correct order.

The Security Council is called upon to enable the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to take over essential tasks under Chapter VII of the Charter that were previously carried out courageously and in the spirit of sacrifice by ECOMOG troops from Nigeria, Guinea and Ghana. By filling this gap, the Council will enable the United Nations to continue to assist the parties in implementing what they agreed upon in Lomé on 7 July 1999, but the draft resolution rightly underlines that the responsibility for the success of the peace process ultimately lies with the parties themselves.

In the draft resolution, the Council reiterates its call upon the parties to fulfil all their commitments under the Lomé Peace Agreement, but some important elements of the peace process have encountered dangerous delays. The momentum and promise of Lomé must be upheld. In particular, the following is now required. The parties, especially the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUFP), must make every effort to speed up the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process and to encourage more ex-combatants to lay down their arms. The recent meeting of the Joint Monitoring Committee characterized the success of the DDR as minimal. Parties, especially the RUFP, must refrain from hostile acts against the United Nations and humanitarian workers. They must also put an end to defamatory public statements directed against the United Nations and UNAMSIL that endanger the peace process.

Those who continue to terrorize the civilian population of Sierra Leone must realize that the amnesty of the Peace Agreement does not extend to atrocities committed after the signing of the Lomé Agreement. The mechanism called for in that Agreement must be set up and made fully operational. This applies in particular to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, but also to the Commission of the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development (CMRRD).

The reorganization of the diamond mining sector recently announced by the Chairman of CMRRD must be in full compliance with article VII, paragraph 6, of the Lomé Agreement. The Commission must ensure that the proceeds are used for the development of Sierra Leone, particularly public education, public health, infrastructure development and compensation for incapacitated war victims, as well as post-war reconstruction and development.

With regard to this last point, my delegation would like to make the following observation: the impressive activities of Ambassador Fowler as Chairman of the Angola sanctions Committee have opened our eyes to the alarming extent to which natural resources can fuel a conflict. One is almost inclined to conclude that some African countries are blessed with the absence of mineral resources. That, of course, is not a very practical and operational conclusion, but it points at the existence of a real problem. My delegation would welcome an exchange of views on this subject in general. It is clearly also relevant in the West African context.

Given the request for international involvement contained in the Lomé Peace Agreement, we feel that the Council has the responsibility to see to it that, on this matter too, the letter and the spirit of the accord are respected so that Sierra Leone's rich resources can at last fuel peace and prosperity instead of civil war.

Mr. Ouane (Mali) (*spoke in French*): I thank Ambassador Greenstock and his delegation, as well as the experts who were involved, for their hard and excellent work, which made possible the formulation of a very realistic draft resolution on the situation in Sierra Leone. My thanks go also to Mr. Hedi Annabi, who has, as usual, given us a very comprehensive and clear briefing following the submission of the report of the Secretary-General.

I wish to reiterate the very strong commitment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and in particular of its current Chairman, President Alpha Oumar Konaré, to speedily bringing peace to Sierra Leone. I wish also to stress the importance of the support of the Security Council and of the international community, which in our view is essential if we are successfully to implement the Lomé Peace Agreement.

I shall not address Mr. Annabi's comments at this stage, but will just ardently express our hope that the draft resolution on which the Council will take action later will be speedily implemented. My delegation supports that draft resolution.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): We recognize that events in Sierra Leone have been moving in the right direction since the Lomé Peace Agreement. However, since the situation in Sierra Leone is still precarious, the continued involvement of the United Nations in bringing peace to that country is of critical significance. With the impending departure of troops of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), it is absolutely necessary that the United Nations assume a greater responsibility there. Bangladesh supported the expansion of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), to prevent any security gap in Sierra Leone that might derail the peace process, and we welcome the recommendations of the Secretary-General in that regard.

In that connection, we welcome the briefing we just received from the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Hedi Annabi. We would like him to brief us, perhaps later, about the conditions on the ground in the area where additional UNAMSIL personnel will be subsequently deployed. We are also interested to know about the situation regarding the civilian police who will need to train the Sierra Leone police force, which is at the moment almost non-existent. We would like to find out whether the number of civilian police, that is 60 at the moment, will be adequate to undertake that training responsibility. We would also like to know about the 29 February deadline for disarmament; we might take this opportunity to request the Secretary-General to keep us apprised of developments in that regard.

We are happy that the draft resolution that we will consider later today reaffirms the strong commitment of the Council to continue to support the efforts for peace and reconstruction in Sierra Leone. It will provide UNAMSIL with an adequate mandate and sufficient strength on the ground to facilitate the full implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement.

Here, we would like to support the comment made by Ambassador van Walsum regarding the resource situation and its links to the implementation of the sanctions and other elements of the Lomé Agreement. We would strongly join him in supporting future discussions in that regard.

The full implementation of the Agreement, however, ultimately rests with the leaders and the people of Sierra Leone. It is they who have to strive hard for the regeneration of a culture of peace in Sierra Leone. Only then will there be lasting peace and true reconciliation. We are convinced that the draft resolution upholds that final objective and will contribute to achieving it.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on Mr. Annabi to respond to the comments and questions that have been addressed to him.

Mr. Annabi: As regards the capacity of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to deploy and to operate: as I mentioned in my briefing, troops made available to the United Nations under the new contingent-owned equipment regulations are expected to come fully equipped according to the agreed standards, and to be self-sustaining for a period of at least 60 days. Now, some contributors sometimes have difficulties in meeting these requirements, and I have alluded to them. These shortfalls in equipment affect the operational capabilities of the troops. We have had to deploy some of the troops before they were fully ready, at a time last December when we did not expect to have to deploy them, because of the withdrawal of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) from certain locations. We are in the process of working with the contributors to see how best we can make up, or encourage them to make up, for these equipment shortfalls. We are also looking at the possibility of civilian contracts for those shortfalls that cannot otherwise be met.

I will not pretend that we have all the logistic equipment that we need; there is always a certain delay in all of our operations. But the main difficulties we are encountering at this time regarding operational capability come from shortfalls in the equipment of certain contingents: equipment which was supposed to be available to them and which is not.

As regards the expansion of UNAMSIL, we have, of course, been negotiating actively with a number of countries which have expressed interest in participating and which have made offers to participate in the expanded UNAMSIL. We already have two Nigerian battalions in UNAMISIL, and we expect another two Nigerian battalions as well as a motorized company; in addition to those, we have offers by four other countries, which I understand are waiting for the adoption of the draft resolution before they are in a position to confirm their offers formally.

On the requirements for civilian police, the proposal contained in the Secretary-General's report for 60 civilian police — as opposed to the six that were there previously, a significant increase — was worked out in consultation with the local police authorities as well as with some of the other international partners engaged in providing assistance to the local police on a bilateral basis. It was felt that these numbers should be enough to meet the tasks foreseen for them, which are limited to advice and assistance to the Government on the restructuring and training of the local police forces. In other words, they are not going to assume direct law and order functions, but only provide advice on the training and restructuring. We would also establish a presence at the DDR sites and at some key population centres, again for the purpose of providing advice on the maintenance of law and order rather than for the purpose of assuming direct policing functions.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Hédi Annabi for his clarifications and responses.

There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.